
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

10 June 2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

CASE CLOSURE CONSIDERATION, UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK RELEASE, AUBERRY GARAGE, 33246 AUBERRY ROAD, AUBERRY, FRESNO COUNTY, RB CASE NO 5T10000813

To: Offsite Property Owners and Other Interested Persons,

This letter is to inform interested parties of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Central Valley Water Board) consideration of closing the subject case, and to request comments from interested parties regarding the proposed closure at the above listed property (Site).

The Site is currently an automobile repair facility and a former retail service station. The Site is on the east side of Auberry Road, approximately 100 feet south of the intersection with Powerhouse Road in Auberry, California. In July 1991, two gasoline Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) were removed from the Site after failing to comply with the operating permit requirements. Tank removal was without a permit or oversight by Fresno County Division of Environmental Health (FCDEH) staff. In June 2002, FCDEH referred the case to the Central Valley Water Board.

In November 2003, analytical results of soil samples collected at 6 feet below ground surface (bgs) by a Central Valley Water Board Staff indicated concentrations of total petroleum hydrocarbons as gasoline (TPHg) of 6,600 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) beneath a former dispenser location. TPHg was also detected at 2,100 mg/kg beneath a former UST location at 10 feet bgs.

In several letters since 25 February 2014, Staff requested a work plan for further Site investigation to determine the extent of the release of petroleum hydrocarbons to soil and groundwater. A work plan was not submitted, and Technical Reporting Order R5-2014-0833, issued on 19 November 2014 by the Central Valley Water Board, required submittal of a work plan. A work plan was not submitted, but on 5 August 2015 case closure was requested which was denied by Staff on 19 August 2015. On 20 January 2016, the State Water Resources Control Board concurred with the closure denial.

The Technical Reporting Order was restated on 17 March 2016, requiring submittal of the work plan by 9 June 2016. In a Staff letter dated 19 July 2016, a work plan was conditionally approved, with a report of findings due by 30 September 2016. On 8 February 2017, another Technical Reporting Order was issued ordering the immediate implementation of the workplan as approved with modifications, and submittal of a report by 1 August 2017.

KARL E. LONGLEY ScD, P.E., CHAIR | PATRICK PULUPA, ESQ., EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In a letter dated 24 September 2018, Central Valley Water Board Staff reviewed and evaluated the case in accordance with criteria contained in the *Low-Threat Underground Storage Tank Case Closure Policy* (Policy). It was determined that the Site met six of eight general criteria, and one of three media specific criteria. The letter requested a work plan to address the remaining Policy criteria.

To evaluate the case for closure in accordance with the criteria contained in the Policy, additional Site assessments were conducted in 2018 and 2021. Based on the analytical results of soil vapor samples in September 2018, the Site meets Vapor Intrusion to Indoor Air media-specific Policy criteria by Scenario 4 for residential and commercial scenarios, with no bio-attenuation zone.

Analytical results of shallow soil samples (0 to 10 feet bgs) collected on 4 March 2021, indicated that concentrations of benzene, ethylbenzene and naphthalene did not exceed the Policy's Commercial and Industrial Direct Contact and Outdoor Air Exposure criteria. The case meets the criteria for Direct Contact and Outdoor Air Exposure Policy requirements.

Based on groundwater monitoring associated with the closed, adjacent Auberry General Store site in 2016, the most recent MTBE concentration was 3.5 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), and no other detections reported in downgradient well MW-7, located more than 100 feet from the Auberry Garage Site source area. The concentrations were less than water quality objectives. Well MW-11, located near the former Site UST, reported concentrations of 6.2 $\mu\text{g/L}$ of benzene and 77 $\mu\text{g/L}$ MTBE in 2016.

As part of the groundwater monitoring for Auberry General Store, nine domestic supply wells in the area were sampled several times from September 2002 until June 2016. Analytical results for eight wells sampled 24 to 32 times, indicated that none of the analytes detected exceed the laboratory reporting limits. One domestic well at 33224 Auberry Road sampled 91 times, indicated mid to low level petroleum constituent concentrations. Analytical results of samples from January 2010 through March 2016 did not exceed the water quality objectives, and none of the analytes analyzed exceeded laboratory reporting limits during the last sampling event in March 2016.

The secondary source has likely been removed by natural attenuation and remediation on the Site, conducted as part of the corrective action for the Auberry General Store. The residual mass appears stable and unlikely to affect the beneficial use of groundwater. Based on the above-mentioned factors, the most cost effective and prudent technology to reduce any remaining secondary source would be by natural attenuation.

Based on the groundwater monitoring and remediation associated with the Auberry General Store, the groundwater contaminant plume has decreased in concentration and areal extent. The shallow aquifer with an oxygen-rich environment and high gradient, is anticipated to promote timely degradation of remaining hydrocarbon constituents. The investigation data show the plume has not migrated further downgradient, and does not appear likely to in the future. It is unlikely that the release would impact water quality in the future and closure of Auberry Garage case under a Groundwater criterion (5) is recommended.

The Site is located within the New Auberry Water Association Service supply area as stated in the Report, but is not connected. However, case closure of sites not connected to a public water system may be evaluated for closure based upon the fundamental principles contained in the Policy, and a site-specific evaluation of developing water supplies in the area. New water supply wells are unlikely to be installed in the shallow groundwater near the former UST release Site. Regulatory oversight by Fresno County should not permit the placement of wells and/or water distribution facilities in areas of pre-existing groundwater contamination.

Central Valley Water Board Staff has determined that the Site conditions appear to meet case closure criteria contained in the Policy. Based on recent and historical assessment results, a complete Conceptual Site Model that assesses the nature, extent, and mobility of the release has been completed.

The information presented for this case demonstrates compliance with the criteria contained in the Policy. Based on the remediation for Auberry General Store, the attenuating concentrations of remaining trace petroleum hydrocarbons in soil, and the absence of petroleum hydrocarbons impact to groundwater, residual petroleum hydrocarbons should not present a threat to human health, the environment, or beneficial uses of groundwater. The residual petroleum concentration in soil will be further reduced by natural attenuation, and no further action regarding this release is necessary. All technically and economically feasible cleanup has been completed.

The proposed closure is based on the Central Valley Water Board Staff's conclusion that the case satisfies the criteria contained in the Policy.

This Public Notice has been transmitted to interested parties in the area, and is posted on the website (http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/public_notices/), under Public Notices, Underground Storage Tanks-Decisions Pending & Case Closures. Details of the Site assessment and cleanup are also available through the [State Water Board GeoTracker website](http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/) (<http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) by searching for case number **5T10000813**. This information may also be reviewed at the Central Valley Water Board office at 1685 E Street in Fresno, California.

You may participate in the case closure process by reviewing technical reports, asking questions, and providing comments. Comments regarding the proposed closure need to be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board at the above listed address **by 10 August 2021**.

Interested parties with questions or comments regarding the Site or the proposed action should contact Khalid Durrani at the above address, by e-mail at khalid.durrani@waterboards.ca.gov, or by telephone at (559) 445-6191.

On completion of the public comment period and in the absence of substantive comment against closure being granted, Central Valley Water Board Staff will proceed with the closure process for the case.